

April 2021



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Mississippi State FSA Newsletter

Mississippi State Farm Service Agency

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Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to help you build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Henry Reed
Gale Martin

To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/ms

Next STO Committee Meeting: TBA

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement, loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security, and loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

You do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

For more information, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport.

New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting

Update Lets Farmers and Ranchers Report Common Acreage Information Once

If you file crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA), you can now provide the common information from your acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

You must still contact both your local FSA office and your insurance provider to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps, or provide program-specific information, including reporting uninsured crops to FSA. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report.

You can access your FSA farm information from the convenience of your home computer using the customer self-service portal, **FSAFarm+**. You'll have the ability to view, print or export personal farm data, such as field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

To enroll in this online service, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

After Identifying Gaps in Previous Aid, USDA Announces 'Pandemic Assistance for Producers' to Distribute Resources More Equitably

USDA is establishing new programs and efforts to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions. The new initiative—USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers—will reach a broader set of producers than in previous COVID-19 aid programs. The Department will also develop rules for new programs that will put a greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers, specialty crop and organic producers, and timber harvesters, as well as provide support for the food supply chain and producers of renewable fuel, among others. Existing programs like the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) will fall within the new initiative and, where statutory authority allows, will be refined to better address the needs of producers.

USDA reopened sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has committed at least \$2 million to establish partnerships with

organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process for CFAP 2 and other FSA programs. Organizations can visit farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance to learn more and submit a cooperative agreement proposal by May 5.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers. This includes:

- An increase in CFAP 1 payment rates for cattle. FSA is automatically issuing these payments. Depending on how producers filed the original application, they may be asked for additional information.
- Information on the additional payment rates for cattle can be found on farmers.gov/cfap. Eligible producers do not need to submit new applications, since payments are based on previously approved CFAP 1 applications.
- Additional CFAP assistance of \$20 per acre for producers of eligible crops identified as CFAP 2 flat-rate or price-trigger crops beginning in April. This includes alfalfa, corn, cotton, hemp, peanuts, rice, sorghum, soybeans, sugar beets and wheat, among other crops. FSA will automatically issue payments to eligible price trigger and flat-rate crop producers based on the eligible acres included on their CFAP 2 applications. Eligible producers do not need to submit a new CFAP 2 application. For a list of all eligible row-crops, visit farmers.gov/cfap.
- USDA will finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance program in the following categories:
 - Applications filed for pullets and turfgrass sod;
 - A formula correction for row-crop producer applications to allow producers with a non-Actual Production History (APH) insurance policy to use 100% of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield in the calculation; and
 - Sales commodity applications revised to include insurance indemnities, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments, and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus payments.

USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers includes investing \$6 billion to expand help and assistance to more producers and adding \$500 million of new funding to existing programs. Please visit farmers.gov/cfap to learn more about the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program and farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance for additional information and announcements under the USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative.

USDA Announces Funding Available to Organizations to Assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers under Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative

FSA Accepting CFAP 2 Applications Beginning April 5

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announces the availability of \$2 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The funding was made possible by USDA's new Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, an effort to distribute resources more broadly and to put greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers impacted by the pandemic.

FSA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) signup will reopen on April 5, 2021, as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Farmers and ranchers will have at least 60 days to apply or make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications.

Cooperative Agreements The cooperative agreements will support participation in programs offered by FSA, including those that are part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Interested organizations must submit proposals by May 5, 2021.

Outreach and technical assistance cooperative agreements support projects that:

- Increase access and participation of socially disadvantaged applicants in FSA programs and services.
- Improve technical assistance for socially disadvantaged applicants related to county committees focused on urban agriculture as well as FSA programs, including loan, disaster assistance, conservation and safety-net programs.

FSA will prioritize review of proposals that support outreach on CFAP 2. To ensure effective outreach during the signup period for CFAP 2, these applications will be reviewed immediately following the submission deadline for prioritized approval and project initiation.

This funding opportunity is available to non-profits having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (other than institutions of higher education), Federally recognized Native American tribal governments, Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments), and public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, including 1890 land grant institutions and 1994 tribal land-grant colleges and universities.

Awards will range from \$20,000 to \$99,999 for a duration between six months and one year. Applications focusing primarily on CFAP 2 will be expedited. For other proposals, FSA anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by June 20, 2021 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 1, 2021.

For more information, view the cooperative agreement opportunity on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) (No. USDA-FSA-MULTI-21-NOFO0001104) or visit fsa.usda.gov/cooperativeagreements.

Reopening of CFAP 2 CFAP 2 provides financial assistance that gives producers the ability to absorb increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible commodities include specialty crops, livestock, dairy, row crops, aquaculture, floriculture and nursery crops. The initial CFAP 2 signup ended on Dec. 11, 2020, but USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning today. Visit farmers.gov/cfap for details on all eligible commodities, producer eligibility, payment limitations and structure and additional program resources.

Producers have multiple options to apply for CFAP 2, including through an online application portal and by working directly with the FSA office at their local USDA Service Center. Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages with the team at the FSA county office.

Additional CFAP Actions

USDA will also finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers according to a mandated formula.

While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct

business, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#). Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Noninsured Crop Coverage Helps Producers Manage Risks

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) helps you manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters. The eligible or "noninsured" crops include agricultural commodities not covered by federal crop insurance.

You must be enrolled in the program and have purchased coverage for the eligible crop in the crop year in which the loss incurred to receive program benefits following a qualifying natural disaster.

NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option

NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Buy-up levels of NAP coverage are available if the producer can show at least one year of previously successfully growing the crop for which coverage is being requested.

Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

NAP Service Fees

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans

Qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, "*Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification*."

For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Know your Final Planting Dates

All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for more information on the final planting date for specific crops. The final planting dates vary by crop, planting period and county so

please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific planting deadlines. The timely planting of a crop, by the final planting date, may prevent loss of program benefits.

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

The Farm Loan team in [Name] County is already working on operating loans for spring 2021 and asks potential borrowers to submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new operation, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures, and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

Reasonable Accommodation

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting/event/function should contact Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).